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EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS

Two years ago at the meeting of the Department of Superintendence Dr. Ayres called attention to the fact that school surveys are a part of a general movement which is resulting in careful scientific studies of all social conditions. These scientific studies of charity organizations, housing conditions, and other social matters, represent the laboratory side of the social sciences. It is easily possible to carry on an experiment in physics in the narrow compass of a physics laboratory, but an experiment in social life requires the larger range of community organization which is presented by a city or a state.

Something of the same lack of breadth has appeared in many of the educational discussions which were carried on prior to the beginning of the movement for school surveys. There were model schools and experimental schools which, in a limited way, tried out experiments in school organization, but it is the larger school system which brings to the surface all the problems of school organization and methods of instruction. The school survey as a part of the social survey movement is therefore an enlargement of theoretical education and of practical reform which is steadily making its way and is influencing both the science of education and practical educational procedure.

Such a statement as this is reinforced by the reading of a pamphlet¹ issued by the Russell Sage Foundation. This pamphlet deals chiefly with the Springfield survey, of which Mr. Ayres's school survey was a part.

Without attempting to refer to all the details that are given in the pamphlet, attention may be called to one special section which answers the question which has frequently been raised in connection with every school survey that has been carried on. That question is: What are the results in tangible reforms that issue from a survey? It may be said that a similar catalogue of results is given for

¹ *Community Action through Surveys*. By Shelby M. Harrison. Department of Surveys and Exhibits, Russell Sage Foundation, New York City, 1916. Pp. 29.

other sections of the general social survey made in Springfield and in other cities. We quote, however, the one section which has to do with the results of the school survey in Springfield.

1. The Rules of the Board of Education have been revised, reducing the number of committees to three, as follows: (a) Education, (b) Finance and Supplies, and (c) School Property.

2. The junior high-school system has been adopted, and four junior high schools organized.

3. A new high-school principal was elected, and the entire organization and course of study changed. Everything complained of in the survey has been eradicated. A well-planned system of supervised study has been introduced, and the very best of discipline is obtained without friction.

4. A new modern high-school building is now being erected and will be ready for occupancy next year. This building will accommodate about 1,500 pupils, and will cost, completed, nearly \$500,000.

5. The lighting, ventilation, and general sanitation of all the schools have been given attention and greatly improved. Fire-exit locks have been placed on all outside doors, and fire escapes on the high school.

6. The new school buildings in course of erection meet the highest standards of requirement with respect to lighting, heating, ventilation, and sanitation.

7. A special supervisor of buildings is employed who sees that all of the property of the district is kept in proper repair.

8. Patrons' clubs have been organized in every district of the city, and nearly every schoolhouse is now used as a social center for neighborhood meetings. Public meetings and political discussions are held in the auditoriums of the several schools, and about one-third of the voting places of the city are now located in school buildings.

9. The number of teachers employed in manual training and household arts has been more than doubled since the survey and pre-vocational training and guidance are promoted.

10. The school census has been revised, and valuable additional information is now obtained.

11. A new salary schedule for teachers and janitors has been established on a basis of efficiency, and the required qualifications of principals and teachers have been raised.

12. Seven branch libraries have been established in as many different schools, and five other centers, the books being furnished to each of these twelve schools through the city library.

13. Attendance department has been reorganized and an experienced supervisor of attendance has been secured. The work of the department has been studied and carefully systematized.

14. Finally, the entire course of study for the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, has been revised and modernized.

Superintendent Spaulding, of Minneapolis, has devised a new method of issuing his annual report. He has substituted for the usual bulky volume a series of monographs dealing with special aspects of school organization. He has published a list of twenty such monographs, which are to appear in the course of the next school year.

The first two monographs¹ are now at hand. They bear the titles, *A Million a Year* and *Financing the Minneapolis Schools*. Some of the titles of later monographs which are to be issued are: *Where Are the Children?* *Keeping the Children Well*, *In a Major Key* referring to music in the Minneapolis schools, *Pencil and Brush* referring to art in the Minneapolis schools, and so on.

The purpose of these pamphlets is to make the activities of the Minneapolis schools accessible to the ordinary lay reader and at the same time to furnish students of education information in detail with regard to the organization and course of study of that school system.

The pamphlet, *A Million a Year*, sets forth in great detail the building needs of the city of Minneapolis. There is a table of average costs of buildings; there is a table showing the increase in school population and the needs of enlarged accommodations for the children who are to attend the schools of Minneapolis during the coming year and subsequent years. The spirit of the whole pamphlet is that of preparing, in a deliberate and fully studied fashion, for the needs of a long period of years ahead. It is gratifying to note that the citizens of Minneapolis were sufficiently impressed by the plea of Superintendent Spaulding to give him what he asked for, and thus meet adequately the building needs of that city for a considerable period of time.

The second pamphlet, on *Financing the Minneapolis Schools*, carries on the kind of reporting which Mr. Spaulding began when he was superintendent of the schools of Newton, Massachusetts. Every student of education and many practical schoolmen have come to realize the importance of doing what Mr. Spaulding did in

¹ *A Million a Year*. Monograph No. 1, Series 1916-17. Approved and ordered published by unanimous vote of the Board of Education, City of Minneapolis, 1916. Pp. 90. *Financing the Minneapolis Schools*. Monograph No. 2, Series 1916-17. Pp. 56.

Newton, namely, reporting fully each financial item to the people who pay the taxes and who are therefore interested in a very large measure in this material side of school organization. The monograph is rendered easy of comprehension for the ordinary reader by charts and diagrams that show the distribution of the funds of the school system over the various items of expenditure.

The monographs are of interest, not merely because of their contents, but because of the experiment which they represent in the publication of an annual report. Some subdivision of the superintendent's report has from time to time been undertaken in other cities, but this effort to keep in constant communication each month in the year with the school constituency is the most extended publishing enterprise which has been undertaken in any school system of the country.

A large sale followed the appearance of the first of these monographs, evidently justifying Mr. Spaulding's expectation that citizens would interest themselves in material of this type if he prepared it for them. It is to be confessed that the problem of getting hold of material of this sort grows more and more complicated each year for libraries and for individuals who make an effort to keep in contact with the school systems of the country. If all the superintendents of large cities in the United States follow Mr. Spaulding's example, it will become a Herculean task for the ordinary student of education to follow this material unless there is organized some central bureau of information and exchange. It is to be hoped, therefore, that there will be in due time some systematizing of educational publications of this sort, so that they may not be lost to the individual reader.

Two more volumes have appeared which deal, among other matters, with methods of efficient study. One¹ is written from the psychologist's point of view and contains material which has been collected in the psychological laboratory and in the practical experience of Dr. Kitson, who has made it his business in recent years to test a number of college students with a view to finding out the

¹ *How to Use Your Mind*. By Harry D. Kitson. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1916. Pp. 215.

way in which they do their work and the relation of methods of work to college grades.

The book will be useful to elementary-school teachers, not so much because the advice which is given in the various chapters can be applied directly to elementary-school problems, but because it will establish that psychological point of view which is necessary if one is to study the needs of pupils of any age and grade.

The first two chapters, on "Intellectual Problems of the College Freshman" and on "Note-taking," are addressed specifically to college students. After these two chapters follows a series of chapters drawn from general psychology, one dealing with brain action, one with the formation of study habits, another with memory, another with concentration of attention, and so on. In these psychological chapters Dr. Kitson has succeeded in giving a very good review of many recent psychological studies. Indeed, the book shows the tendency of all recent psychology to go over into the fields of practical application. In addition, he has turned much of the psychological material which he reports into interesting, though often very general, suggestions of how to carry on intellectual work effectively.

The second book¹ includes as one of its three subdivisions a chapter on the art of study. The other chapters which go to make up the book are on the art of story-telling and of questioning. Each division of the book is the outgrowth of lectures which Mr. Horne has addressed to teachers in various localities. Each division is also accompanied by a bibliography and a series of questions, so that the book may be used as a textbook for the training of teachers.

The criticism which one feels disposed to make of the book after reading its pages is that the discussions are so brief and sketchy that it will be difficult to make advantageous use of the book without a great deal of reference to the collateral material which is suggested. For example, one may choose a selection from the last chapter on methods of study. On p. 151 Mr. Horne says:

First of all, teachers must study with the pupils and let the pupils see how they themselves would set about mastering the problem or assignment. Get

¹ *Story-telling. Questioning, and Studying.* By Herman Harrell Horne. New York: Macmillan, 1916. Pp. 181.

pupils to help you in the conduct of the recitation itself; as, for instance, in stating the aim of the lesson, selecting the main points, condensing the truths of the whole into a single statement, and seeing the bearing of the lesson on living. For acquainting pupils with the method of study, there should be a study period in the schedule; where such a period is lacking a portion of the recitation period itself may be profitably given to learning how to study.

When an inexperienced teacher reads this advice, although he will be moved to try to carry out the suggestion, he will not know what steps to take. What is needed is explicit, detailed advice. Much of the literature of methodology fails because it gives the teacher in training general advice, but does not succeed in describing the particular steps which are, after all, the matters that give the inexperienced teacher the greatest difficulty. Still Mr. Horne's book will be suggestive, and it is perhaps ungracious at this stage of our study of the problem of how pupils ought to study, to criticize too severely any effort to deal with this problem. Sketchiness is in part due to the fact that we have no final solution of the questions that here arise.

The New York Public Education Association is one of the most conspicuous illustrations of an organization which has brought private contributions to bear on the development of public elementary education. Not only has this organization participated in the discussion of many of the general problems of administration in New York City, but it has taken a hand in the working out of certain very interesting experiments.

A recent pamphlet¹ published by the Association describes in detail the work of the visiting teacher. For some years past the organization has been supporting a small staff of trained people whose business it is to discover children who are in difficulty in their regular school work and to go to the homes of these children and see what kind of assistance can be rendered them so as to bring them back into proper contact with their school activities.

The effort of this organization to start the movement for a closer contact between the school and the home has met with so much

¹ *The Visiting Teacher in New York City*. By Harriet M. Johnson. Public Education Association of the City of New York, 1916. Pp. 84.

success that the Board of Education has seen the wisdom, in a number of centers, of employing visiting teachers as a part of the regular staff of the schools.

Some details of the organization of this movement are of importance. It was found more advantageous for the visiting teacher to be located at a single school than to distribute her time over a number of different school buildings. This definite location of the teacher's work makes it possible for her to become acquainted with the community and with those cases which are likely to cause most trouble. The school reports all cases that seem to need attention. The different reasons for which these cases are reported have been tabulated. They are classified under the following heads: (1) conduct below standard, which is the most common reason for referring a case to the visiting teacher; (2) scholarship below standard; (3) irregular attendance; (4) ill-health; (5) adverse home conditions; (6) lateness and a few other miscellaneous reasons. It is found in all these different cases that sympathetic attention on the part of the visiting teacher accomplishes more than does a drastic application of authority. As in the case of medical inspection, so in this general social supervision of pupils the school evidently can accomplish more by using educational methods than by using methods of the policing type.

The pamphlet now issued by the Public Education Association gives a full description of the work as carried on by the teachers in the employ of the Association. The pamphlet is valuable as a suggestion to those who are studying the problem of improving school organization. It is at the same time a careful record of the results of a notable experiment in supplementary instruction.